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CSCE COMMISSION EXAMINES:

" *AFRICA'S HELSINKI* "

THE CONFERENCE ON SECURITY, STABILITY DEVELOPMENT, AND COOPERATION IN AFRICA (CSSDCA)

in

SOUTH AFRICA, NAMIBIA, KENYA and NIGERIA
(Codel DeConcini: August 4 to 19, 1991)

PREPARED BY THE STAFF OF THE
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

October 1991

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AFRICA'S HELSINKI

It is an attempt to establish collectively standards by which African states will deal with each other and their own citizens to achieve stability, cooperation and development. It has been called "Africa's Helsinki." Organizers concur that chronic problems facing many African nations derive as much from instability and insecurity as from dire economic circumstances. They suggest that collective and continent-wide efforts are needed to provide the stability necessary for further economic, social and political development, and formation of a viable partnership between Africa and the world community.

In November 1990, the Africa Leadership Forum and the Secretariats of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa jointly convened a brainstorming meeting on CSSDCA. Next, a steering committee met in February 1991 to consider the format, mechanism and process of the proposed CSSDCA. The following month a roundtable of officials, representatives of international organizations, scholars and legal experts was held in Cologne, Germany to examine any lessons that might be drawn from the Helsinki process. African NGO groups convened in April to examine their potential roles in the CSSDCA process. In May, a document setting forth a blueprint for African security, stability, development and cooperation was adapted in Kampala, Uganda. The June 1991 OAU summit considered the findings of the Kampala meeting and mandated that a group of experts meet at the end of 1991 to examine the Document, which will be formerly submitted to the OAU Council of Ministers meeting in February 1992. If approved, CSSDCA would likely be ratified by African leaders at a June 1992 OAU summit.

The *Kampala Document* preamble sets forth CSSDCA objectives. A section on principles and policy measures is divided into four subsections or baskets known as "calabashes." Recommendations for the implementation of the process conclude the document.

(from *Kampala Document*, May 1991)

SECURITY CALABASH

"The concept of security goes beyond military consideration. It embraces all aspects of the society including economic, political and social dimensions of individual, family, community, local and national life. The security of a nation must be construed in terms of the security of the individual citizen to live in peace with access to basic necessities of life while fully participating in the affairs of his/her society in freedom and enjoying all fundamental human rights."

STABILITY CALABASH

"There has to be a due recognition of the fact that a fundamental link exists between national security, stability and sustainable development and these conditions can only be brought about by democratic practice and democratic institutions encompassing full respect for human rights, official accountability and popular participation."

DEVELOPMENT CALABASH

"Popular participation and equal opportunity and access must be promoted and sustained as a crucial basis for the realization of Africa's development objectives and strategies."

COOPERATION CALABASH

"African countries must seek to explore opportunities for beneficial cooperative relations with other developing and industrialized nations. There is no contradiction between the need for intensified cooperation between African and non-African countries and the principle for self-reliant and self-sustained development."

A CHANGING AFRICA

Almost everyone the delegation met believed that Africa was entering a new era which held forth opportunities and challenges for leaders and peoples. A central theme of discussions was human rights and the responsibility of government to ensure, protect and promote them. Discussions touched on topics ranging from one-person-one-vote for all Africans with President de Klerk of South Africa, to freedom of movement with President Moi and Attorney General Wako of Kenya, to the status of proposed elections with Eduard Dos Santos and Jonas Savimbi of Angola. Recent events in Angola, Namibia, South Africa and Ethiopia, where longstanding conflicts have been resolved and political and economic reforms initiated, were widely attributed to the perceived inviability of communist ideology, withdrawal of Soviet aid and general retreat of Soviet influence in Africa.

Co-Chair DeConcini discusses changes in South Africa with President F.W. de Klerk, Pretoria, South Africa

Another issue discussed in each country and emphasized in the Kampala Document was the role of women in Africa and the need to address very serious sex discrimination. Although women form the working backbone of rural agricultural societies in Africa, have primary and often sole responsibility for supporting family units and have begun to achieve high professional levels, they continue to face severe legal and cultural discrimination. Despite these barriers, African women are emerging as a new political and economic force in many nations. It was reported to the delegation that women comprised a majority of voters in recent elections in Kenya and Nigeria. In Soweto township outside of Johannesburg 85 percent of micro-enterprise loans -- funded in part by the Agency for International Development (AID) -- were sought by and given to women, who often established profitable ventures and maintained the highest repayment rates. In Kenya, where very few women hold political office, women lawyers are in the forefront of calls for equal rights, political pluralism, legal reform and environmental protection.

Many suggestions were offered as to how the United States and other developed nations might become involved in the CSSDCA process. Though most believed that the process was a mechanism primarily for Africans, some envisioned a role for industrial nations in the CSSDCA later on, believing that some assistance might be appropriate. While no consensus emerged as to what form this support should take, suggestions included use of technical assistance borrowed from experiences with the Helsinki process, financial aid, and some form of participation in the CSSDCA process by the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, Japan, Germany and the EC.

Events in Eastern and Central Europe and the Soviet Union demonstrated graphically the vulnerabilities of illegitimate regimes. This has not been lost on Africans. Since the fall of communist regimes began in Eastern Europe two years ago, single-party dictatorships have ended in more than a dozen sub-Saharan African nations, and changes in South Africa, Zaire, Cameroon, Togo, Madagascar and elsewhere are occurring even now. While the urgency of the situation may seem readily apparent, many Africans fear that Africa will become marginalized and relegated to the peripheries of world affairs as events in Europe, Asia, and North America dominate global attention. Some believe that continent-wide integration and cooperation is the only way to promote, preserve and advance the interests of African nations and peoples. In this regard, the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA) offers an opportunity that should be seriously considered.

South Africa

Many met by the delegation who considered transition to a democratic South Africa inevitable placed considerable emphasis on South Africa's potential role in the economic and political future of Africa. Some viewed South Africa as an "Africa in microcosm," complete with numerous and sometimes conflicting ethnic groups, developed and developing population centers, and a fluid and volatile political and social mix. Kenyans, Nigerians, Namibians and other Africans contacted later in the visit by the delegation cited the importance of effectively integrating South Africa into the continent, and some hypothesized that South Africa would become an OAU member as soon as some form of a transitional power sharing arrangement was implemented. The CSSDCA process was widely viewed as a suitable vehicle for South Africa's multi-faceted reintegration into Africa. Others, however, pointed to the prospect of South Africa turning inward in light of its economic problems, focussing on restructuring its own political and economic institutions while playing a limited role in Africa.

Two South African parliamentarians from the Democratic Party attended the Kampala Forum, as did the Secretary General of the ANC who represented Nelson Mandela, and a number of South African journalists. Several articles on the Kampala Forum appeared in the South African press and a wide array of emerging NGOs involved in the process of restructuring South Africa were eager to become involved in the CSSDCA process. Participants at the Kampala Forum referred to South Africa as "Africa's stirring giant," citing the potential economic boost South Africa could provide the rest of the continent. Such a role, however, was predicated upon the complete eradication of apartheid. President de Klerk and Foreign Minister Pik Botha, while professing a lack of focus on CSSDCA, cited it as an important development especially in relation to security conditions and demilitarization of the continent. Senator DeConcini presented President F.W. de Klerk a letter raising a number of human rights concerns.

Senator DeConcini visits with microenterprise owner assisted by U.S. aid in Soweto township outside Johannesburg, South Africa

Nigeria

Ethnic strife, civil war, coups d'etat, military regimes and intermittent periods of civilian government mark Nigeria's political history since independence from Britain in 1960. Presently, Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation with approximately 116 million people and home to more than 300 distinct ethnic groups, is ruled by a military regime, the Federal Military Government (FMG), headed by President Ibrahim Babangida, who came to power following a 1985 coup. A 19-member Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) is the highest political authority in Nigeria. There is no elected national legislative body. Only two political parties have been permitted to register, the National Republican Convention and the Social Democratic Party, both of which have their political manifestoes imposed upon them by the military regime. Though Nigeria's oil and gas reserves make it potentially one of the world's richest states, the poverty rate has climbed and the middle class is threatened with extinction. It is Africa's biggest debtor nation and has one of the lowest per capita incomes on the continent.

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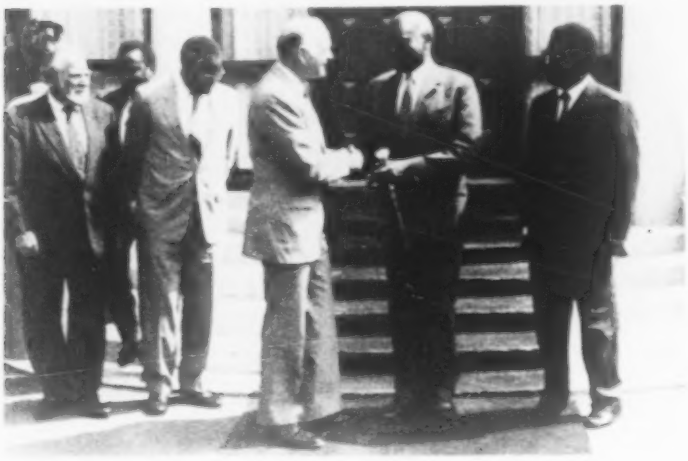
Nigeria plays a significant role in any continent-wide endeavor, especially vis-a-vis CSSDCA as President Ibrahim Babangida currently serves as chairman of the OAU. The nation's tenuous political, economic and internal security situation and chronic corruption at almost all levels of society, however, raise serious questions about the promised transition to civilian control scheduled for late 1992. While many Nigerians are in the forefront of promoting CSSDCA and dozens attended the Kampala meeting, past failures of civilian governments and uncertain plans for political and economic restructuring leave some observers skeptical about Nigeria's role in CSSDCA.



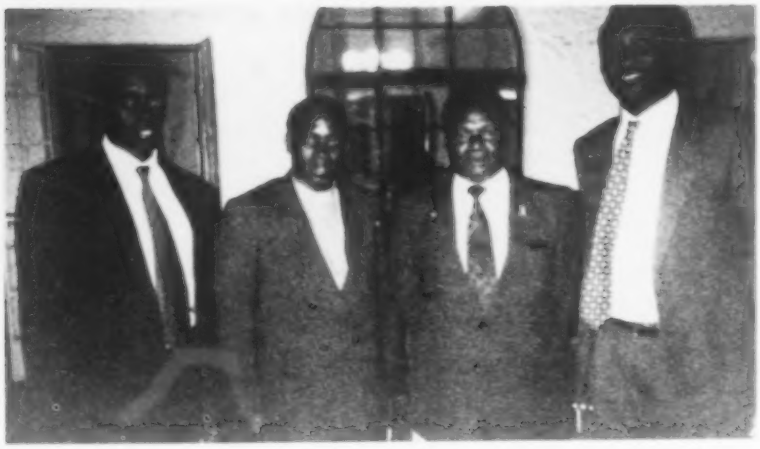
Co-Chair DeConcini is greeted by Kenya's President, Daniel arap Moi

Kenya

Kenya's regional influence imparts upon it an important role in development of the CSSDCA process. More than two dozen Kenyans attended the Kampala Forum, comprising one of the largest groups from any one African nation. Among Kenyans attending the Kampala meeting with whom the delegation met were an eminent artist, a former foreign minister, parliamentarians, prominent lawyers, business persons, and the president of an organization which aids NGOs working in development areas. The government of Kenya declined to officially send representatives to the forum. It was reported to the delegation that some Kenyan participants were referred to as dissidents and criticized in parliament and by the press.

Kenya currently faces serious unemployment, a fast growing population, shrinking per capita income, and a government intolerant of democratic dissent which relies increasingly on threats of violence to quell growing demands for reform. President Moi's claim that such reforms would lead to tribalism and ethnic conflict was described to the delegation as Moi's "last chip" in his bid to retain power as President of Kenya. The concentration of executive powers was a leading source of criticism heard by the delegation. One former high-level government official claimed that democratic "institutions have been emasculated and laws prostituted." Members of parliament have been effectively "straight-jacketed" -- dependent upon Moi for their political survival. Since the 1982 constitutional amendment making Kenya a *de jure* one-party state, demands for political pluralism have been met forcefully by the Moi government. Numerous well-known lawyers, editors and other professionals have been detained or arrested. The government recently embarked on a policy of confiscating passports to prevent individuals from leaving Kenya.

In meetings with President Daniel arap Moi, Attorney General Wako and other officials, Senator DeConcini raised issues related to Kenya's deteriorating human rights situation. Co-Chairman DeConcini protested the recent seizure of passports from dissidents and their family members and submitted a list of such individuals to President Moi. Mr. DeConcini urged President Moi to release individuals detained for peacefully expressing a desire for political pluralism and to allow free and open discussion of political issues. Senator DeConcini requested that the U.S. Embassy in Kenya send observers to trials of prominent dissidents later this year.



Four leading Kenyan dissidents who met with CSCE delegation in Nairobi. (left to right: Paul Muite, Rev. Bernard Kariuki, Charles Rubia, Gitobu Imanyara)

NOTE: Muite, Imanyara and at least three others met by the delegation were arrested between 14 - 16 November for their continued efforts to promote democracy in Kenya.

Namibia

Namibia's Constitution, adopted on 9 February 1990, provides for universal suffrage, a two chamber legislature, independent judicial and executive branches, rule of law and equal rights for all people. Namibia's adoption of such a constitution is a critically important step in ensuring the future protection of human rights in Namibia and is suggestive of the path that the government and people desire to take. Some with whom the delegation met, expressed concern regarding the overwhelming predominance of SWAPO members in government -- in part due to the weakness and fragmentation of the other parties (seven political parties are represented in the parliament). However, well organized NGO groups and a lively press are presently contributing to an open and free political debate and acting as a check on the development of a one party state. Discrimination and violence against women as well as human rights problems in Namibia, are unlike most African states.

In developing a new constitution, Namibians addressed a myriad of socio-economic and political problems and created legal mechanisms to prevent a return to the past. Such a process, and the nation's first tenuous steps as a sovereign society, are drawing the scrutiny of African nations and human rights activists that are looking to possible models of democratization. In this regard, it has been suggested that Namibia has an important role to play in the CSSDCA process. Tanzanian Minister Ibrahim Kaduma noted that CSSDCA had been placed on the OAU agenda and believed Namibia could play a positive role in the process. The emerging role of NGO's in the development of human rights, fundamental freedoms and government accountability throughout Africa was illustrated in the activities of the Legal Assistance Centre. A major function of this organization was to educate Namibians about the unprecedented rights accorded them by the constitution. Programs were developed for classroom discussion, a network of legal advice clinics has been established and publications promoting the constitution and ombudsmen system are being mass produced. Besides pressing the Namibian government on various human rights issues, attorneys of the organization have begun to establish networks with attorneys of other African nations in order to propel human rights concerns beyond their own borders.

"Women Join Hands for a Better Namibia" wall mural, Windhoek, Namibia